Foll-e

The e-Bulletin of The Folly Fellowship

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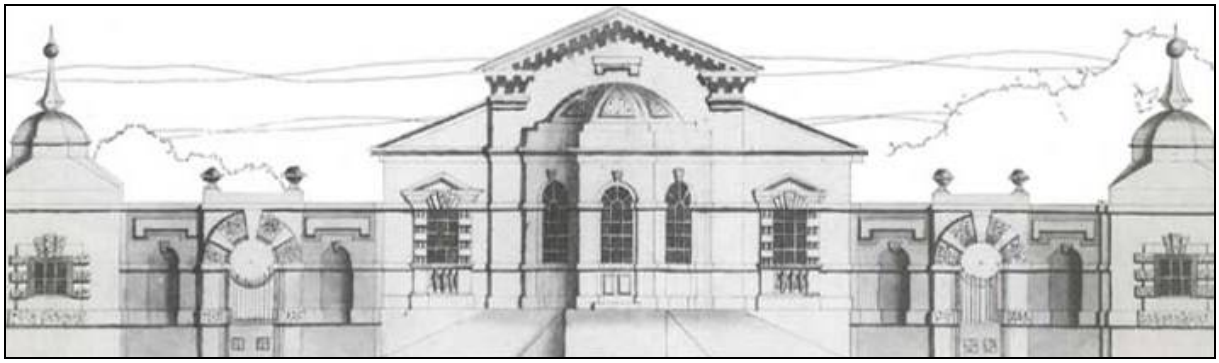
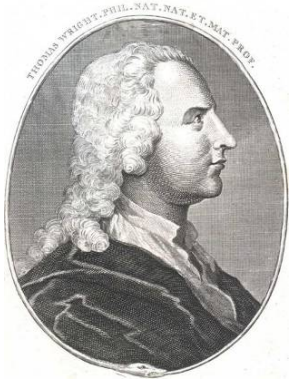


The Menagerie at Horton, Northamptonshire

It was the late Gervase Jackson-Stops who had the vision to convert the ruins of the Menagerie into a unique country home, and in doing so save something rare in Britain. In doing so he also saved one of the last surviving garden buildings from Horton House, the Earl of Halifax's residence that was demolished in 1936. It means that all we have left of this once great estate is its Icehouse, the Green Bridge, New Temple (with Ionic portico and pulvinated frieze), part of the Triumphal Arch, and what is thought to be the remains of a Norman Motte and Bailey in the fields immediately behind the Menagerie building. There are also rumours of tunnels linking the Menagerie to the Icehouse and to other parts of the grounds, but there usually are on great estates like these.

The Menagerie is a single-storey building comprising decorative corner pavilions linked to a higher central section, below which is a shell-lined grotto. It was originally thought to have been by the architect Daniel Garrett, who also designed the Culloden Tower in Richmond (North Yorkshire) in 1746 and the Gibside Banqueting House (Northumberland) in 1751. More recently, however, it has been attributed to Thomas Wright (pictured below) who is known to have worked for Lord Halifax in the 1750s when the Menagerie was probably built.

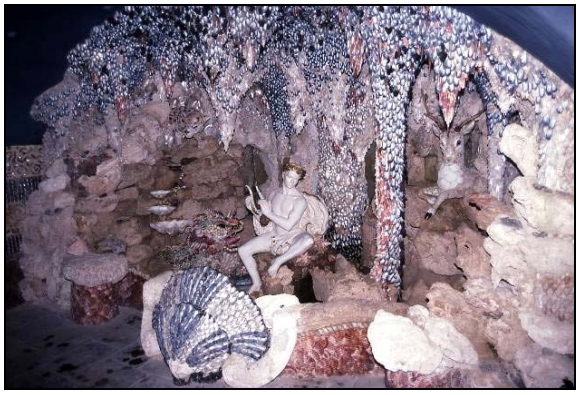
Wright was born at Byers Green in Co. Durham in 1711. At 19 he started a school there teaching mathematics and navigation, but later took up architecture and garden design. By all accounts his work at the Menagerie was a triumph, not least its plasterwork by Thomas Roberts of Oxford, and the four niches in the saloon which held what Horace Walpole later described in 1763 as "four great urns representing the animals of the four parts of the world, made of plaster and painted to look like bronze." They were topped by bas-relief panels with trophies of weaponry from each of the four continents, and with medallions set below the deep coving bearing symbols of the zodiac framed by sprays of flowers to match each symbol. The ceiling depicted Father Time with a scythe and holding the symbols of Eternity, and with the Four Winds to each corner of the ceiling. In one of the ceiling bays Apollo's head was set within a sunburst, while in others there were Acanthus scrolls and cornucopia. The chimney-piece was painted to resemble porphyry (a type of igneous rock, usually



purple, with large-grained crystals like feldspar or quartz), with a pedimented over-mantel and central panel bearing a laurel wreath. Garlands were set above the windows and door of the bay, each lined with drops containing musical instruments, while anterooms were decorated with rosettes in the ceilings of the vestibule alcoves.

All this opulence allowed the saloon to be used as a banqueting room, and as a home to the Earl's personal art gallery, demonstrating his wide knowledge and understanding of the eighteenth century world. Musicians would play in the bay and food would be prepared in then simple brick-vaulted basement.

Following a fashion that was established by Louis Le Vau at Versailles some 80 years before, the building that we see today was the centrepiece of Lord Halifax's private zoo, with cages being set behind it in a semi-circular enclosure covering two acres and all surrounded by a moat. What was kept in the zoo is unclear, but Walpole loved it nonetheless, describing it as "a little wood, prettily disposed with many basons of gold fish." Today, there is no remaining evidence of the zoo, except some of the ponds and the glorious rococo folly.



When Thomas Wright retired from designing buildings and gardens for his gentlemen patrons, he returned to County Durham and to his study of astronomy from his observatory in Westerton, built by him between 1744 and 1796. Jackson-Stops was less fortunate in his retirement and died soon after hosting a party to mark the completion of his shell grotto in the undercroft, where Orpheus plays music to the animals.

Working alongside Ian Kirby, Jackson-Stops left us with a memorable garden that incorporates four of the fishponds that were on the site plus two remarkable thatched arbours, one being circular and classical and the other triangular and Gothic. They are remarkable follies in themselves, and are today set among gloriously picturesque gardens.

The Menagerie in Europe: an overview

Menageries in Europe were surprisingly commonplace and often contained large collections of exotic animals from around the known world. Many of them later became public zoological gardens within some of our great cities, but in the beginning they were status symbols reflecting the owner's wealth and power. Royal Courts in old Europe were especially keen on them, but their history dates from around 2,000 BC when Mesopotamian Kings kept lions in cages, releasing some of them as prey for a hunt. Lions were also given to foreign dignitaries as symbols of trust and friendship, a practice that continued into the twentieth century when Edward Heath received two pandas from China in 1974, and in 1993 when John Major was given a stallion from the President of Turkmenistan for his 50th birthday.

In England, the first known menagerie was created by Henry I at Woodstock, near Oxford, where he kept a collection of lions, camels and a porcupine presented to him by other monarchs. During the thirteenth century King John formed his collection at the Tower of London, often using the beasts for sport against each other or against his critics and enemies, much like Roman Emperors used beasts at the Colosseum. Excavations made in the 1930s discovered the foundations of a lion

tower in what is now the moat, and confirmed that leopards and even crocodiles were exhibited there. By 1710, the collection had grown to more than 280 animals, with hyenas, tigers, seals, camels and even a smoking baboon on show. When it finally closed in 1835, after nearly six centuries on the Tower site, the animals were moved to the new Zoological Society Garden in the corner of Regents Park, where the collection remains today.

The Monkey House at London Zoo, 1835

Renaissance Society was fascinated in the natural world, mainly because new trading routes were opening up continents and making many new discoveries. In Italy, Cardinal Scipione Borghese (1576-1644) expanded the Villa Borghese estate to create his 'villa of delights' and show off the status of his family. In addition to a new Villa designed by the architect Flaminion Ponzio, the cardinal also commissioned Domenico Savino da Montepulciano to create an Uccelliera (Avery) as a back-drop to a secret garden containing fountains, statues, woods and ancient artefacts. Elsewhere, monarchs and men of high-rank who funded trade expeditions were rewarded with treasures from those trips, including captured animals and artefacts. Many of these were exhibited in buildings known as *Kunst-kammers* in the mid-1500s, containing many of the things that formed the known Universe at the time, including zoology, botany, geology and astronomy, as well as man-made achievements like art, literature and his latest inventions. Those with live exhibits were attached to a botanical garden and menagerie.

The first of these was created in Vienna in 1553 by Ferdinand I of Austria, and was followed by collections in Dresden in 1560, Munich in 1567 by Albrecht V of Bavaria, and Schloβ Ambras, near Innsbruck in 1566, by Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol. When these men eventually tired of their exhibits they often traded them with other leaders and was how Tsar Peter the Great was able to create his vast exhibition at Saint Petersburg in 1714 (below), one of the last to be built in Europe.

Always at the heart of these exhibitions was a display of animals in a menagerie. They were commonplace in seventeenth century France when Antoine Furetière's dictionary defined them as a *'Place designed to feed animals and administer the countryside…used for the castles of Princes and Great Lords, who maintain them more for curiosity and magnificence than for profit…'*

One of them was built at Versailles (above) by Louis Le Vau for King Louis XIV. It stood in the south-west corner of the park and was the King's first major building project on the site. Although some animals were introduced in 1664, it was not completed until 1670. Le Vau's design used cages that radiated outwards from a central pavilion and viewing area. It was a revelation in its day and was copied widely across Baroque Europe. Demolished in 1801, all that remains of the menagerie today is some of the shelters built in the corners of the animal enclosures.

One of those who emulated the Versailles model was Jean Nicholas Jadot der Ville-Issey, who in 1745 built a menagerie at Schönbrunn, the new summer residence in Vienna of Francis 1, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations. His plan was for twelve enclosures and a keeper's lodge, together with a pond and two farmyards, all of which were stocked with animals during the summer of 1752, just one year after building work began.

Like Le Vau's earlier model, the Schönbrunn menagerie was set around a central pavilion that was completed in 1759. At first it was used as a breakfast room and salon for Francis I and his family, but when the park opened on Sundays in 1778 to "decently dressed persons," it was became a restaurant and still is today.

The Menagerie at home

During the latter half of the eighteenth century many landowners in Britain were building private menageries and aviaries in the parks of their country estates, using them to show off a range of animals and birds for the pleasure of their house guests. Some of those birds, like the pheasant and peacock are still kept on a wide scale and are so familiar in the British countryside that they are regarded as native species. The second Duke of Richmond was an avid collector of fauna and in 1725 had lions, bears, ostriches, eagles and even a tiger in the menagerie behind his Goodwood home. When his lioness died a few years later he was said to be so upset that he had her buried in the park and a life size stone carving of her placed over the grave; it remains to this day. Other owners were so proud of their animals that they had them captured on canvass by some of the leading artists of the day, one of whom was George Stubbs who in 1762-3 painted a zebra that belonged to Queen Charlotte and a lion owned by Lord Shelburne. The Queen's menagerie was kept at her Cottage in Kew and was in part reinstated when marsupials were released in 2007, alongside wood sculptures of the more exotic animals that were kept there, including the Quagga (non-striped zebra), wild boar and a tiger.

In her article *Menageries and the landscape garden*, published in the Journal of Garden History in 1988 (vol.8.4, pp.104-117), Sally Festing noted that 43 private menageries are known to have been built in England, including Walter Rothschild's collection at Tring Park, which is probably as well-known today as it was in the 1890s through an extraordinary archive of photographs showing the second Baron Rothschild and his animals at play.

Rothschild was an expert in taxidermy, so in addition to capturing animals on huge expeditions around the world, he also stuffed them for his own museum. By the time of his death in 1937, he had amassed around 950 mammals, 200 reptiles, 300 fish. 144 giant tortoises, 2,000 birds, 300, 000 bird skins and 200,000 bird eggs, 2 million moths and butterflies, and numerous shells, sponges and corals. Live specimens were also kept in the park, included rheas, kiwis, kangaroos and cassowaries, and a tame wolf. The Baron is renowned for using zebras in place of horses and on one occasion drove a team of them into the forecourt of Buckingham Palace for the amusement of Queen Victoria.

In comparison, one of the least known was the collection at Wingerworth Hall in Derbyshire (demolished in 1924), home of the eccentric Sir Thomas Windsor Hunloke (1773-1816). His house (pictured below) was a copy of nearby Chatsworth and is believed to have been built by Francis Smith of Warwick. Whether or not Smith also built the stables is not clear, but it is there that Sir Thomas kept most of his menagerie.

Like all great and eccentric men, Sir Thomas never let anything get in the way of his ambitions. It is said that during the Napoleonic War he invited a group of French prisoners of war who were based at Chesterfield to attend mass with him in a private Oratory at the Hall. The law at that time restricted the movement of all captives to no more than three miles from the town, and since Wingerworth was just beyond the third milestone on the Chesterfield to Wingerworth road, Sir Thomas ordered a group of estate workers to dig it up and move it beyond the gates to his estate so his invitation could be accepted.

By this time Sir Thomas had already put together a large collection of wild animals, most of which were kept in his stables until over-crowding meant that some of the safer varieties were moved inside the Hall with him. It is said that one of the prisoners of war walking in the park had a narrow escape when he stumbled upon an escaped bear, and never fully recovered from the event. It was enough to prompt Sir Thomas to commission Sir

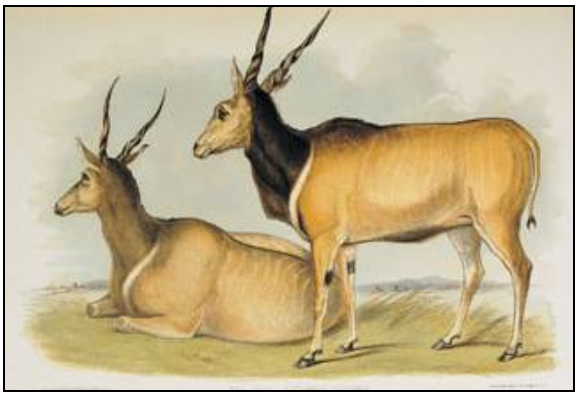
Humphrey Repton to redesign the grounds in 1809 and include a purpose-built menagerie. A report on Repton's plan appeared in *Country Life* magazine in September 1988, when Tim Warner announced that Repton's Red Book for Wingerworth had been rediscovered. His article said that "In the southern extremity of the park in a sequestered romantic spot amid some woodland, Repton proposed a smaller lake to accompany the rehabilitation of…[the]…menagerie. This collection, comprising wolves, bears, monkeys and exotic birds had hitherto been housed at the Hall. Repton gives no indication of how the animals are to be restrained, but concentrates instead on creating a new landscape for their exhibition."

Following the Versailles model, the plan was to set the menagerie around a "rusticated keeper's cottage wherein one room on the lower level was to be reserved for Lady Hunloke. From here three windows or glass doors would command very interesting scenery: that in front looks upon the quiet pool, whose surface is only ruffled by the aquatic fowls, while the other two windows may look on cascades, or water in violent and rapid motion, capable of being increased at pleasure." In the end, Repton's plans were put on hold. After his death in Paris, Sir Thomas's grandson Henry did his best to maintain the menagerie, but when he died in 1856, the animals were sold at auction. A report in the Derbyshire Courier in April of that year reported that among those sold were:

- Pair of wolves from Sweden for 19 guineas to Mr Youdan, Surrey Music Hall, Sheffield;
- Brown Bear from Sweden to Mr Youdan for £26-5s-0d;
- Very handsome Russian Bear to Mr Youdan for 11 guineas;
- Pair of North American Brown Bears to Mr Youdan for £24-3s-0d;
- Pair Esquimaux Dogs (Huskies) to Mr Youdan for £7;
- Bloodhound for £10 to His Grace the Duke of Portland;
- Pomeranian dog for 4 guineas to Mr H Bowdon;
- Nasicus Cockatoo and cage for £3-7s-6d to Dr Durrant of Sheffield, and one for £6-5s-0d to Mr Barrow of Staveley.

One of those represented at the auction was Sir Joseph Paxton who bought the collection of Emus, as well as a blue and yellow Macaw for £10, and very large Eagle Owl and cage for £14. According to the Courier these were for "placing in the garden of the Crystal Palace, Sydenham."

The menagerie at Knowsley Hall, between Liverpool and Manchester, contained the largest of the private collections and was put together by the 13th Earl of Derby during the early 1800s. In its heyday the menagerie covered one hundred acres of parkland holding 1,272 birds and 345 mammals, some of which are now extinct, like the 200 year old flightless swamp hen from Lord Howe Island off the coast of Australia, a Himalayan mountain quail which disappeared later in the nineteenth century, a Paradise Parrot that was last seen about 1930, and the Long-tailed Hopping Mouse. Many of the animals were painted and form the bulk of the paintings in the Liverpool Museum, one of the zoological treasures of the north.



At Stowe in Buckinghamshire, the Marquess of Buckingham developed a collection of stuffed animals and had them placed in an Orangery-style building designed around 1780-81 by Vincenzo Valdrè, who also created the State Music Room in the house. A few years later, in 1784, Sir Rowland Hill established one at Hawkstone Park where he kept wild monkeys and a herd of antelope, together with black, white and golden coloured rabbits that were allowed to run wild across the park. Others were built at Castle Hill, near Filleigh in Devon for the Fortescues, at Tatton Park in Cheshire, by Lord Egerton, and at Taymouth, Devon, by the Marquis of Breadalbane.

The menagerie at Combe Abbey Park, near Coventry was one of many based on the Versailles model, with a central pavilion (below) surrounded by cages in which the animals could be seen from the octagonal viewing room. Like the one at Horton, the pavilion at Combe Abbey has now been converted to a permanent residence, as is The Jungle at Eagle in Lincolnshire, where Samuel Russell Collett set up his personal zoo from about 1820 onwards. Writing in 1826, Major General Loft announced that "several Deer of different Kinds are kept here, the American Axis, which has produced a Breed with the Does; there are several very fine kangaroos, a Male and a Female Buffalo (I think) and their young calf," all kept alongside some "very fine gold pheasants…[and a]…great number of gold and silver fish."

The Demise and Closure

By the end of the nineteenth century the private menagerie was fast disappearing from country estates across Europe, largely through a fall in their fascination brought about by wider education and understanding, and by their cost. Many of the animals were given to city authorities to form the basis of new zoological collections, or sold to travelling circuses. Today very few private menageries exist, with the most obvious being those maintained by Lord Bath at Longleat, Lord Derby at Knowsley Hall, and the Duke of Bedford at Woburn. While the animal parks have gone from the others, many have been able to retain some of the buildings associated with them. Of these, one of the best known has to be the structure at Horton, where Lord Halifax held his famous collection.

The Trustees of The Folly Fellowship
cordially invite you to their
Twentieth Annual Garden Party at
The Menagerie at Horton,
Northamptonshire,
on Saturday, 16 August 2008.

Entry to the grounds will be permitted from 1pm onwards. Bring a picnic lunch, come and meet old and new friends, enjoy the sumptuous gardens with their amazing flower beds, the shell grotto and the new and old follies, and then join us for Pimms and light refreshments at the end of the afternoon.

Tickets must be purchased or ordered in advance, and cost £20.00 each for members and £25.00 for guests. Please make your cheque payable to The Folly Fellowship and send it to Andrew Plumridge at 7 Inch's Yard, Market Street, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5DP. Dogs are not allowed in the gardens, and you are asked to dress appropriately for the occasion.

The Maiden's Tower and Lady's Finger in Co. Louth, Ireland

At the mouth of the river Boyne, on its south side near Mornington in Co. Louth, stand two structures: one is the Maiden's Tower and the other, just a few metres away, is known as the Lady's Finger. Both date from 1542 and were built as watchtowers during the O'Neill rebellion when a Spanish invasion was feared, and when the village (then called Marinestown) was closer to the sea than it is now. The towers were later used as navigational aids to guide ships into Drogheda harbour.

Maiden's Tower is 60 feet (18.2 metres) tall, narrow and square, and is constructed of stone. Inside is a spiral stone staircase that leads to a paved roof and a gap that is just about sufficient to admit one person through it. Tradition states that the tower was erected by a 'Fair Lady' to watch for the return of her 'Knightly Lover', who had gone to war in a distant land. It was agreed beforehand that when his ship returned, a white banner would be hoisted at the masthead if he lived, but if he was not a black standard would be displayed. The prearranged signal was, of course, forgotten, and when the warrior arrived back at the mouth of the Boyne he saw a strange castle had been erected upon his territory. He at once concluded that it was the watchtower of an invading army, whereupon, as a signal of defiance and vengeance, he ordered a black flag to be displayed. On seeing this, the 'Fair Lady' was filled with despair and threw herself

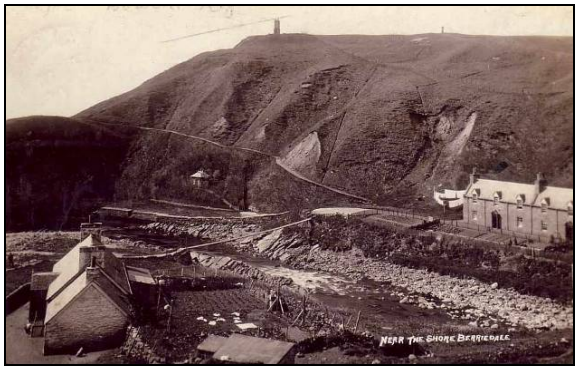
from the top of the tower, where she was dashed to pieces on the rocks below!

At 42 feet (13 metres) in height, the Lady's Finger is smaller than the tower and was erected during the eighteenth century. In what is thought to be a variation on the Fair Lady story, this one tells us that the girl survived the fall but sustained an injury to her arm resulting in one of her fingers being dislocated and left sticking up in the air. The spike was built in memory of the tragic event.

Today both landmarks are situated among the sand dunes, with no sign of any "rocks below"!

Derrick Green

Folly of the Month: **The Duke's Candlesticks at Berriedale**



A couple of miles to the south of Berriedale, in what we used to call Caithness (now just Highlands) are two small towers looking out over the North Sea. At first their size is disguised by a trick of perspective, and only closer inspection reveals the deceit behind these miniature towers.

It has long been held that the towers were built on the instruction of William Henry Cavendish Cavendish-Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland (1738-1809) during the early years of the nineteenth-century, but this is now questioned because the tower pre-date the Duke's tenure at the Langwell Estate on whose land they stand. They were put up after too many fishermen lost their lives trying to navigate back to harbour along this treacherous stretch of coastline, serving as markers against the skyline. Although small, the follies were easy to see during daylight, and were assisted at night by the addition of lighted braziers.

The Duke of Portland's association with the towers caused them to acquire the nickname of the Duke's Candlesticks, although they are sometimes called the Berriedale chess follies because they resemble the bishops found on a chessboard.

Gobbets

- It is always nice to receive praise, so share in it by clicking http://weekendstubble.blogspot.com/.

Pulhamite at Sandringham, Norfolk

- Last month's Bulletin included a link to articles on Pulhamite on the Parks and Gardens UK web-site (www.parksandgardens.ac.uk). If you want to know more about Pulhamite and of James Pulham & Son, and would like a free copy of the English Heritage booklet *Durability Guaranteed: Pulhamite rockwork – its conservation and repair*, please e-mail andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk. The booklet is a bit technical in parts, but does include a simple explanation of what Pulhamite is and a very helpful gazetteer of Pulham sites.

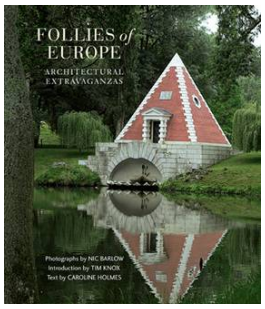
Forthcoming F/F Events

Saturday, 16 August 2008 – The Annual Summer Garden Party is at the Horton Menagerie, south of Northampton. Tickets will be released in the next few weeks through andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk.

Saturday 20 – Sunday 21 September 2008 – The William Beckford Weekend. See the June Bulletin for the weekend itinerary or contact Susanne at susanne.harding@ukf.net. Tickets for members are £13 for Saturday and £5 for Sunday, and £15 and £7 for guests, including a bacon sandwich or pastry with your Saturday morning coffee.

Saturday, 08 November 2008 – Visit to Hardwick Park, Sedgefield, Durham (an eighteenth century garden currently being restored) and more. Further details to follow.

Other Events



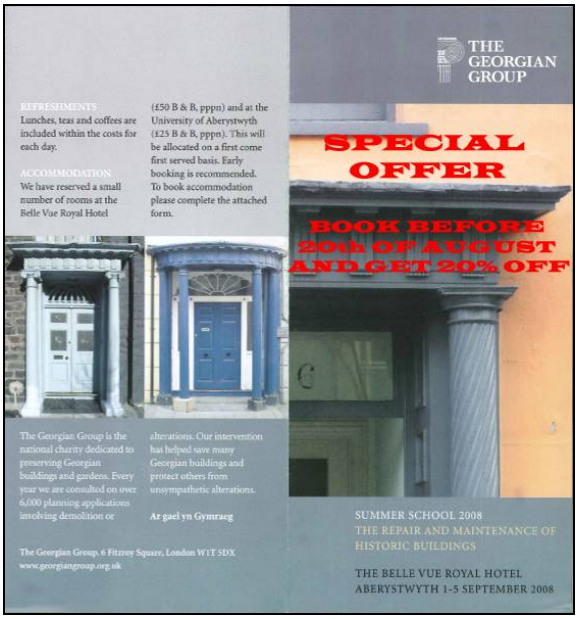
02 August – 29 October 2008 – An exhibition of photographs of European Follies by Nic Barlow, at Petworth House, West Sussex. The exhibition will then move to Hove Museum and Art Gallery from 24 January to 3 May 2009.

29 – 31 August 2008 – The Annual Conference of the Association of Gardens Trusts takes place at Leweston School, near Sherborne (Dorset), with its theme based loosely on Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd*. As well as the usual array of talks, visits will be made to Sherborne Castle, Duntish Court, Clifton Maybank, and Shell House. Details of the conference and accommodation are available from www.gardenstrusts.org.uk.

01 – 05 September 2008 – The Georgian Group's Summer School takes place at the Belle Vue Royal Hotel in Aberstwyth, and provides homeowners and professionals alike with an opportunity to gain an understanding of building conservation issues, such as the history of brick, mortars and renders; how to repair stone and carve lettering; the use of plaster in decorative mouldings; the use of historic paints and colours; and the development, use and repair of sash windows. Among the other events is a Parks and Gardens Study Day, with an illustrated talk on picturesque landscapes in Wales (Pierce-field and Penllegare) and guided tour of the Hafod Estate.

The total cost depends on the number of sessions you attend, *i.e.* £40 for one, £180 for five, and/or £70 for the sash window day and £60 for the landscape day. Accommodation costs are on top of this. However, if you book before 20 August and quote the password *'building conservation offer,'* you will receive a 20% discount.

Details are available from Michael Bidnell on 0207 529 8928 or michael@georgiangroup.org.uk.



Caption Competition

The winner of the June caption competition is Dominic Martin who thinks that Jan is saying *"The ruin on my right has been standing here since 1772."* A bottle of Brouilly is on its way to him in South West London with our congratulations.

Picture credits: *Banner* – www.themenageriehorton.co.uk; *Horton House* – www.ashrare.com; *Horton Menagerie* – Michael Cousins; *Thomas Wright* – www.enciclopedia.com; *Horton Grotto and Gardens (3)* – Michael Cousins; *Monkey House* – www.zoo-hoo.com; *St. Petersburg* – www.en.wikipedia.org; *Versailles* – www.zoo-hoo.com; *Stubbs Zebra* – www.royalacademy.org.uk; *Baron Rothschild* – www.nhm.ac.uk; *Wingerworth Hall* – www.lh.matthew beckett.com; *Elands painting* – www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk; *Combe Abbey* – www.projectrestoration.tv; *Horton Menagerie* – Michael Cousins; *Maiden's Tower and Stone Finger* – Derrick Green; *Duke's Candlesticks* – Doug Houghton; *Sandringham* – www.pulham.org.uk; *Caption competition* – Peter and Joyce Kiff. *Other pictures by the editor or from the Folly Picture Library: our grateful thanks to all of them for the use of their excellent pictures.*